

Dear FCC:

I write to you in opposition to the Comcast/NBC merger. Over the years, Comcast has emerged as a monopolistic cable company and has received press coverage concerning a number of dubious practices. For instance, paying customers web sites cannot be accessed through web searches because Comcast charges search engines for access to their customers sites, even though customers pay for these sites. Further and more recently, Comcast has reportedly initiated business practices and a fee structure that increases charges to competing online movie providers such as Netflix and Hulu, both movie content providers. This will increase Netflix and Hulu monthly fees at the expense of the consumer, who will ultimately pay for more these services. Comcast's profits will increase. Comcast charges a premium for their services and they are the only show in town in many communities. Netflix, Hulu, and Amazon OnDemand have been competitive and provide a service to consumers. If Comcast is allowed to implement their business strategy, consumers will have to pay from both ends. We already pay Comcast for Internet access. Why should we also have to pay them indirectly through higher fees imposed on our content providers?

Isn't competition the basis of capitalism and good for the consumer? A democracy's strength is predicated upon the electorate making informed choices. If content is controlled by gatekeepers such as Comcast, whose primary goal is profit, then how do we assure that democracy and the public's interest are served? The attempts to vertically integrate and control online content by Comcast are threats to our democracy. The merger should not be approved by the FCC, Congress, or the President. Have we not learned lessons from the past? I urge you to strongly oppose this merger.

Sincerely,

Dr. Ed Vieira